

Remarks Following a Meeting With European Union Leaders

November 3, 2009

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome, for the second day in a row, Prime Minister Reinfeldt. I also want to recognize President Barroso and Javier Solana. These three gentlemen, obviously, represent the leadership and the increasing integration, successful integration, that's been taking place in Europe.

I congratulated them on the completion of the Lisbon Treaty, which will further move Europe in the direction of integration, not only on economic policy, but also on a number of security issues. I believe that a strengthened and renewed EU will be an even better transatlantic partner with the United States. And so, we are extraordinarily appreciative and supportive of the efforts that they've made and the leadership of these three gentlemen.

Our discussions today built upon my April meeting with all 27 EU leaders in Prague. We discussed our shared commitment to success in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where EU civilian assistance has played an absolutely critical role. We discussed climate change extensively, and all of us agreed that it was imperative for us to redouble our efforts in the weeks between now and the Copenhagen meeting to assure that we create a framework for progress in dealing with what is a potential ecologic disaster. We discussed the situation in Iran and emphasized how important it is for the United States and the European Union to coordinate carefully and closely in sending a clear message to Tehran that we want them to be a full member of the community of nations, but that they have to act consistent with international rules and responsibilities with respect to their nuclear program.

We reaffirmed our commitment to strong, sustained economic growth that was articulated by the G-20 in Pittsburgh and reaffirmed our intent to continue to expand trade and resist protectionist measures between the United States and the European Union. And we spoke about how we can actually coordinate more effectively in preventing terrorism from spreading between our various countries. We also had a discussion about the Middle East and how we can work together closely on that front.

Overall, I want to say a special congratulations to President Barroso, who's been reelected for another 5-year term. He has done an excellent job in his role with the Commission. And I want to thank Fredrik for the leadership that he's shown on a wide range of issues, not just within Europe, but around the globe, as well. Javier has been a critical partner with us in dealing with the Iran issue. So these three gentlemen have shown global leadership. I'm glad they had a chance to visit the United States, and I'm absolutely committed to continuing to strengthen the transatlantic partnership that this meeting represents.

Prime Minister Reinfeldt. Well, thank you very much, Barack. Thank you for the hospitality. This is also very important for Europe to value this close cooperation with the United States and—since we share the same values. And I think we had a very good meeting.

We had at length a discussion about climate change. And I want to say that we need an agreement that can deliver on the two-degree target that could give us a solution on financing and that is global and that keeps—puts everyone together. That is what we need to see.

And I want to say that I think President Obama has shown real leadership on this issue. When we talk to people here in the United States, they all come back to this, that President

Obama himself is very committed. He has great knowledge in this item, and we have great hopes for your leadership in this issue.

When it comes to Afghanistan, we also have a close partnership in Afghanistan. We have a huge representation also on European Union side. We have 35,000 troopers there and more than a billion euros a year that we actually immersed in development resources given to Afghanistan. So, of course, we need to have a close working relation when it comes to finding a way for Afghani ownership of the development in Afghanistan.

We actually have also delivered on four points. We have a start on cooperating on energy and launched an EU-U.S. ministerial energy council. Our foreign energy ministers will have their first meeting tomorrow, which we welcome. Secondly, we intensify our cooperation and dialog on transatlantic economic integration in order to reduce the barriers of trade.

Thirdly, deliverance is restored on dialog on development, on global food security, climate change litigation, and the Millennium Development Goals. And last, to intensify the EU-U.S. cooperation on antimicrobio resistance. So we are very glad for all of these deliverances, as well.

Thank you.

President Obama. Excellent.

President Barroso. I think President Obama and Prime Minister Reinfeldt already made the most important points regarding the very productive meeting we just had. I'd like to thank President Obama for his very kind words to the European Union. In fact, we believe that is more important than ever, this relationship.

In this age of globalization, it is quite obvious that the United States and Europe can make a real difference. There are so many issues in the global agenda, from climate change to financial and economic cooperation to trade, many issues that we have discussed today.

Regarding climate change, I want to tell that I am more confident now than I was in days before. The Copenhagen negotiations have been slow, but I would like once again to pay tribute to President Obama's leadership. As I said earlier, President Obama changed the climate on the climate negotiations because with the strong leadership of United States we can indeed make an agreement. We are working toward a framework agreement in Copenhagen that will be an important agreement for the world. And we had, particularly, a very good discussion on this today, and I think that was one of the most important points of our exchange.

Of course, I will not repeat what President Obama and Prime Minister Reinfeldt just said. But it is extremely important on the other issues like Afghanistan and Pakistan and other issues of global security. Also, we work together now in the European Union with the Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty is the treaty that will give the European Union a reinforced capacity to act, a more coherent position also, externally working with our main partners, and, of course, working especially with our American friends.

President Obama. Javier.

High Representative Solana. I have nothing to add really meaningful, Mr. President. [Laughter] Mr. President, thank you very much for your hospitality. We appreciate it.

President Obama. Well, thank you very much. You should understand that the rule in Washington is even if you don't have anything to say, you should take a long time to say it. [Laughter] So, obviously, we'll have to give you more training. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Prime Minister John Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden, in his capacity as President of the European Council; President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of the European Commission; and Javier Solana Madariaga, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union.

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